



A whopping 63 percent of nurses are burnt out.

What Can Your Organization Do?

More nurses than ever before are experiencing burnout: “emotional exhaustion, a tendency to depersonalize client encounters, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.”² In a 2017 study, 85% of nurses surveyed stated the job made them fatigued, 63% were currently experiencing burnout, and 41% were considering moving to a different organization because of burnout.³

Visit any online nursing forum and you'll hear the same story. Nurses want more interaction with patients, yet in the face of dwindling resources and increasing responsibilities, they have less time than ever before to focus on the bedside:

- “There is so much asked of the nurse and no one is standing up and saying, ‘Hello, I have increasing number of patients to care for, treatments, decreasing amounts of certified nursing assistants, increasing number of rounds...’”⁴
- “When I started, there was more hands-on patient care...that’s the joy of doing the job. Now, we have more responsibilities and much less time with patients. Absolutely, that’s speeding up burnout.”⁵
- “My co-workers and I have discussed this a lot in the past year...We are noticing that nurses are rapidly becoming ‘medication dispensers.’”⁶

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“Like many nurses, my symptoms of burnout began without warning...I became a lot more cynical...empathy, something I used to think I was so good at, became foreign to me. My whole outlook on nursing and the way I treated patients was shifting, and not in a positive direction.”

—Rachel, Seattle area RN¹

The High Costs of Burnout

Nurse burnout has very real consequences across the entire industry, affecting nurses, organizations, and patients.

Nurses who are burned out experience more health problems—and take more sick days. Research from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative showed rates of depression for nurses are twice that of the general population, 18% as compared to 9%.⁷ And a 15-year study of more than 12,000 nurses in Denmark found that nurses who experienced high levels of work pressure had nearly a 50% increased risk of ischemic heart disease.⁸

With Baby Boomers retiring every day, healthcare organizations are already struggling to hire great talent. High levels of nurse burnout make it even harder to keep that talent: almost 29% of all new nurses leave within one year. This attrition costs both time and money: it takes 86 days to fill an RN vacancy, and the cost of replacing just one bedside nurse is estimated at \$58,000.

But the costs of burnout are more than financial. Research shows that nurse burnout is linked to an *increased rate of patient hospital-acquired infections*,⁹ lower quality of care,¹⁰ and increased patient mortality, with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Union estimating that “for every additional patient added onto an average nursing workload, the rate of patient mortality increases by 7 percent.”¹¹

The First Step to Mitigating Burnout

Nurse burnout threatens every healthcare organization’s ability to provide safe, effective, and cost-efficient patient care.

Yet the very factors that contribute the most to nurse burnout—increased patient loads, the need for more documentation, and tighter budgets—are the challenges of 21st century healthcare. How then can organizations reduce nurse burnout while simultaneously adapting to and keeping up with the constantly changing healthcare industry?

By nurturing engagement.

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Research shows that the right engagement strategies can make nurses more resilient, dedicated, and eager to learn—and less fatigued, isolated, and stressed.¹² Organizations that have more engaged nurses see fewer patient complications, and according to research by Gallup, “nurse engagement is the No. 1 predictor of mortality variation across hospitals.”¹³

While nurse engagement is affected by a variety of factors, organizations can drive higher levels of engagement throughout the employee lifecycle by focusing on

- **Onboarding** – Ensuring new nurses are supported in skill and career development, have access to community resources, and are prepared *before* day one on the job
- **Learning** – Enabling continuous training and creating a nurse-centric learning culture
- **Performance Management** – Providing ongoing feedback, aligning organizational and employee goals, and ensuring opportunities for career advancement

Read on to learn how to address these 3 factors:



1 <https://nurse.org/articles/How-I-Discovered-the-Meaning-of-Nurse-Burnout/>

2 Maslach C. Burnout: The cost of caring. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall; 1982. [Ref list] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2908908/>

3 <https://www.americanmobile.com/nursezone/nursing-news/new-survey-finds-high-rate-of-nurse-fatigue/>

4 <http://allnurses.com/nursing-activism-healthcare/activism-nursing-responsibilities-1066844.html>

5 Private interview.

6 <http://allnurses.com/general-nursing-discussion/how-much-time-39235.html>

7 <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/healthcare/depression-a-silent-epidemic-for-nurses>

8 <http://oem.bmj.com/content/oemed/67/5/318.full.pdf>

9 <https://www.mededwebs.com/nurse-burnout>

10 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2908908/>

11 <https://www.mededwebs.com/blog/how-nurse-burnout-affects-patient-care>

12 https://arizona.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10150/621959/azu_etd_mr_2016_0279_sip1_m.pdf?sessionid=9F795D70F33B44D7496D465E94DB1B20?sequence=1 page 13

13 <http://news.gallup.com/poll/20629/nurse-engagement-key-reducing-medical-errors.aspx>